

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

RESPONSIBLE SUPERVISION

From the perspective of the PhD supervisor and the PhD candidate

KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Scoping review of **35 studies** (Pizzolato & Dierickx., 2023)

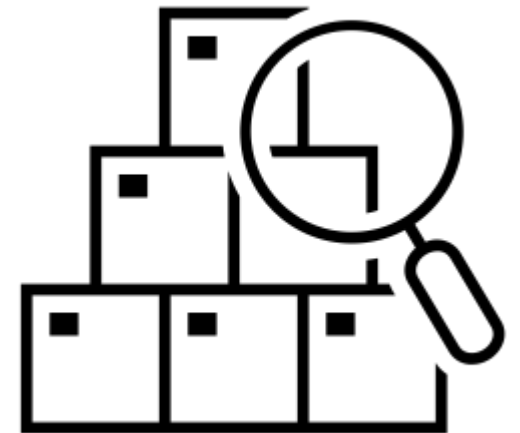
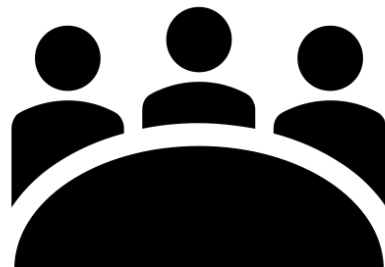
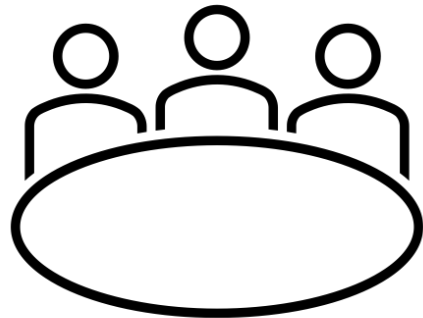
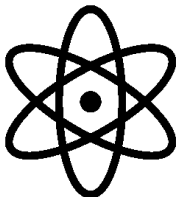
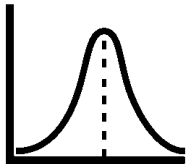
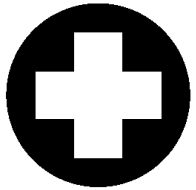
Mostly surveys

One party (exceptions: Buljan, Barać and Marušić 2018)

RESEARCH QUESTION

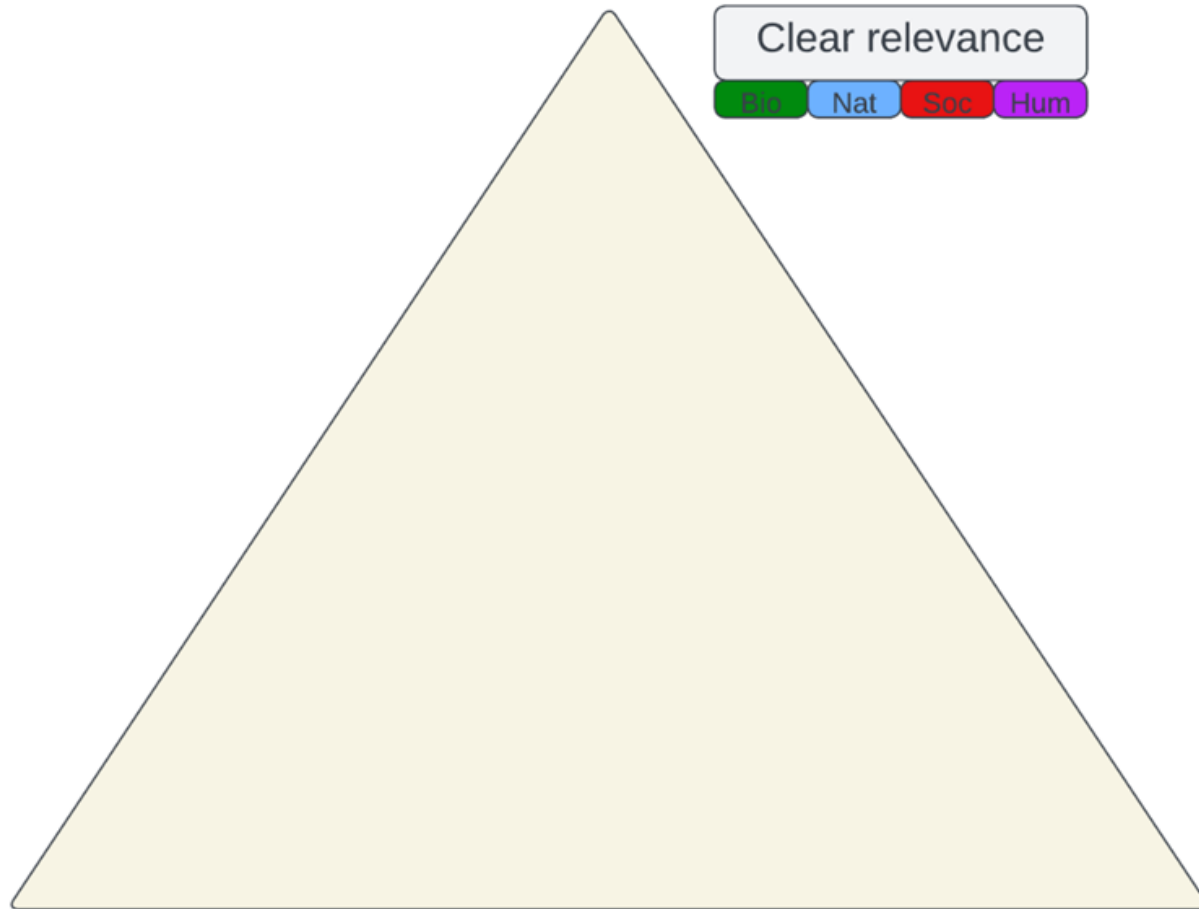
What sort of *practices or procedures* do (or could) supervisors engage in to *promote responsible conduct of research* among their PhD candidates?

METHODS



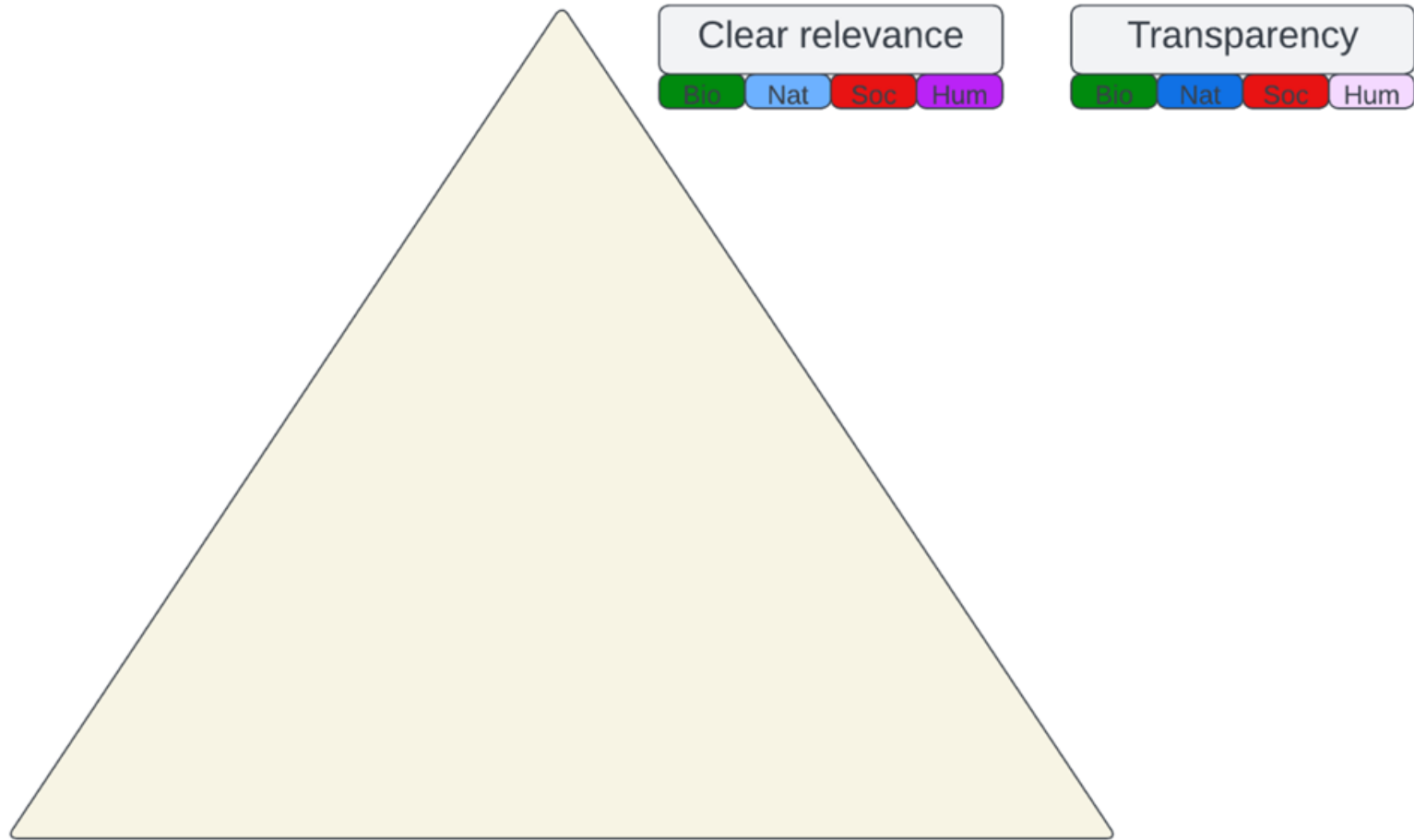
DEMOGRAPHICS

Disciplines	Subfield	Supervisors	PhD candidates	Total
Social and behavioural sciences	Quantitative & qualitative	6 & 6	6 & 3	19
Biomedical sciences	Life sciences & medical sciences	5 & 5	5 & 5	20
Arts and humanities	Archaeology, philosophy & linguistics, languages	6 & 4	4 & 3	16
Natural and technical sciences	Theoretical & experimental and applied	8 & 6	3 & 5 & 8	30
Total				85



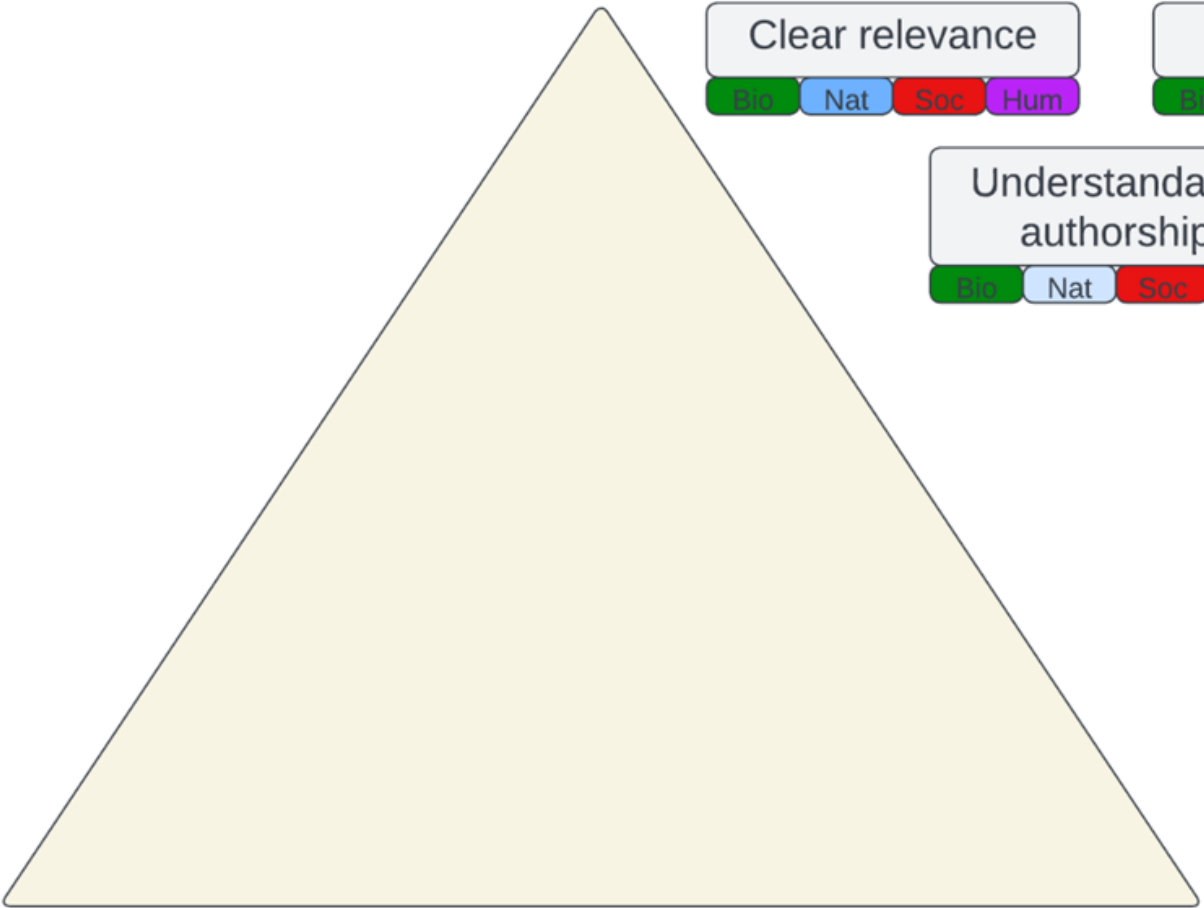
One thing I really do always look for when supervising PhD students and also when reviewing papers is the useful contribution? The ***contribution beyond the narrow thing you've studied?*** Because sometimes I get the feeling that research is becoming more and more narrow into certain slight little corners and details of a certain field. ***And I always look for at the beginning or at the end of a paper or a project, are they able to to say, why should I care about this?***

– Supervisor social sciences



So it's, they use a lot of human words in anthropology. So what I wrote was a **clear plan of action**. Like what? Either if I'm reading like a proposal or something, what are you going to do? **How are you going to get from A to B?** Or if I'm reading something that people have written that's already done, then what have you done? So I can follow the steps that have been taken?

– PhD candidate social sciences



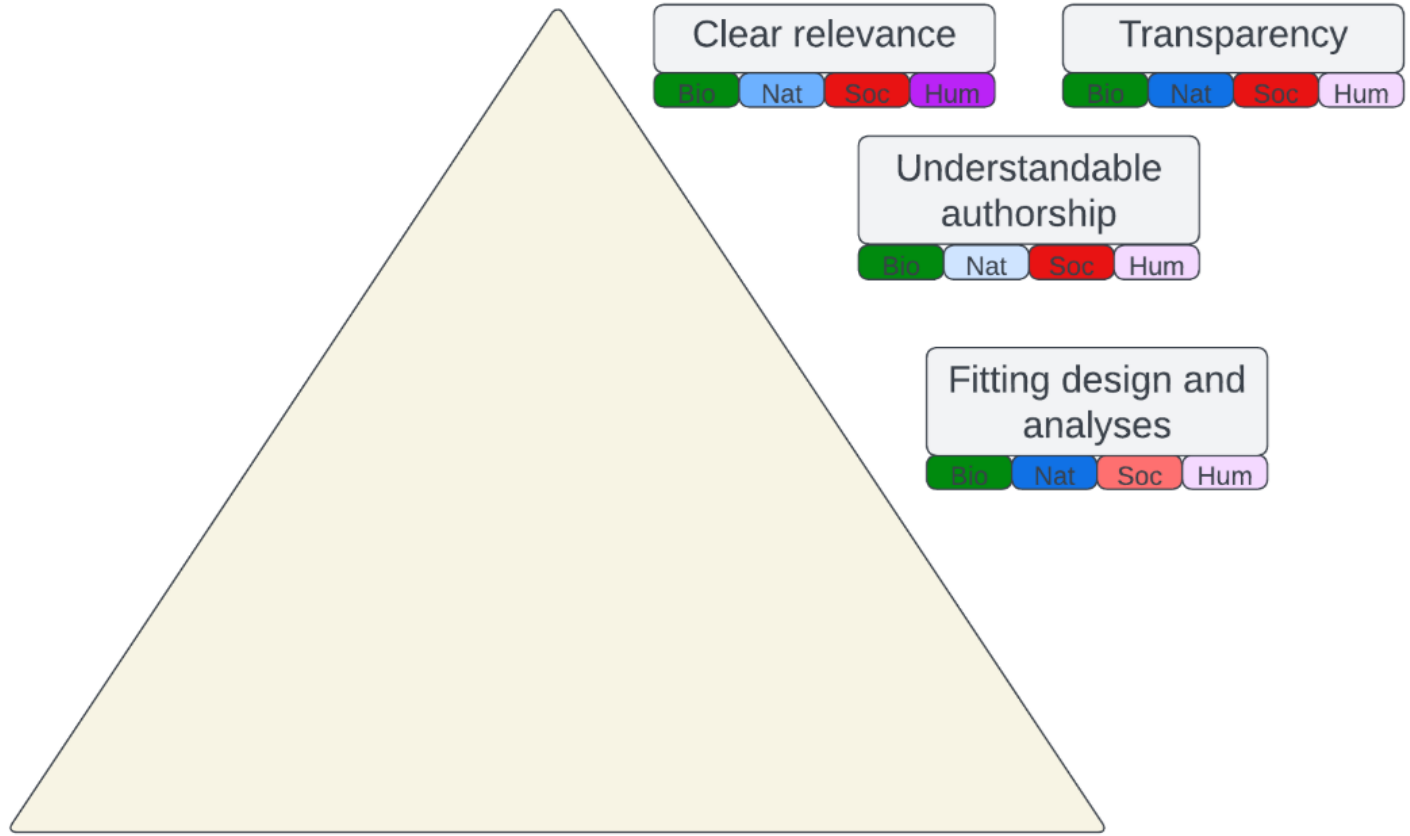
Clear relevance
Sci Nat Soc Hum

Transparency
Sci Nat Soc Hum

Understandable authorship
Sci Nat Soc Hum

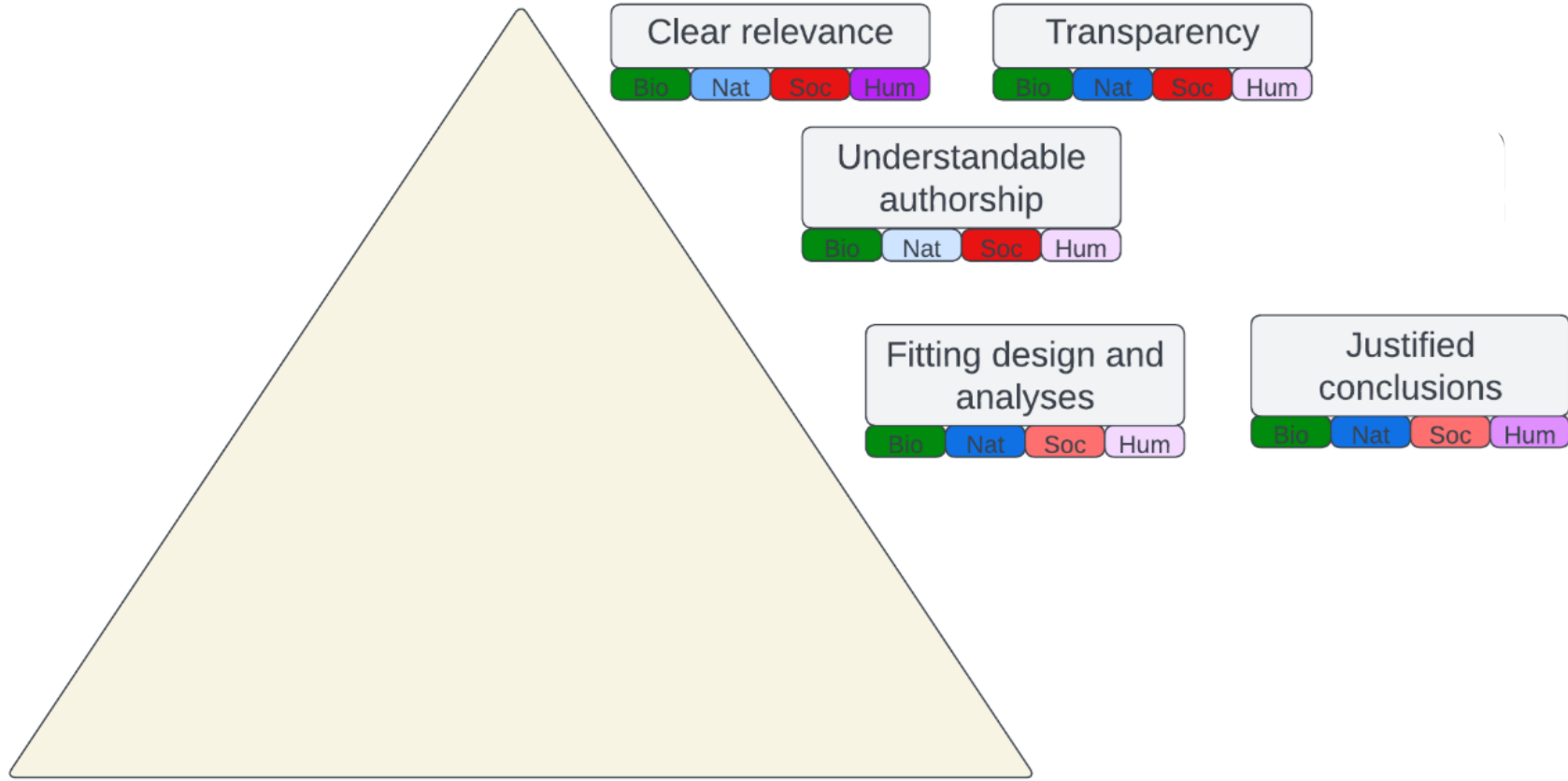
But some things I think [um], yes, I'm more coaching manager I believe. It's kind of I'm there to facilitate as much as possible but important things [um] **senior tasks like that stuff with those authors, that [um] that can get very tedious sometimes anyway,** [um] I like to do myself.

– Supervisor biomedical sciences



The method section, does it consist of existing and techniques that are also, um, compatible with each other? So can you combine them. So it's not really. So did you grab the first data set but more like, okay, did you grab a data set and maybe not a data set and **are they compatible** or do you do you just like compare apples and oranges now? .. So do the methods consist of well known techniques do are compatible. I think it's mostly explicit...

– PhD natural sciences

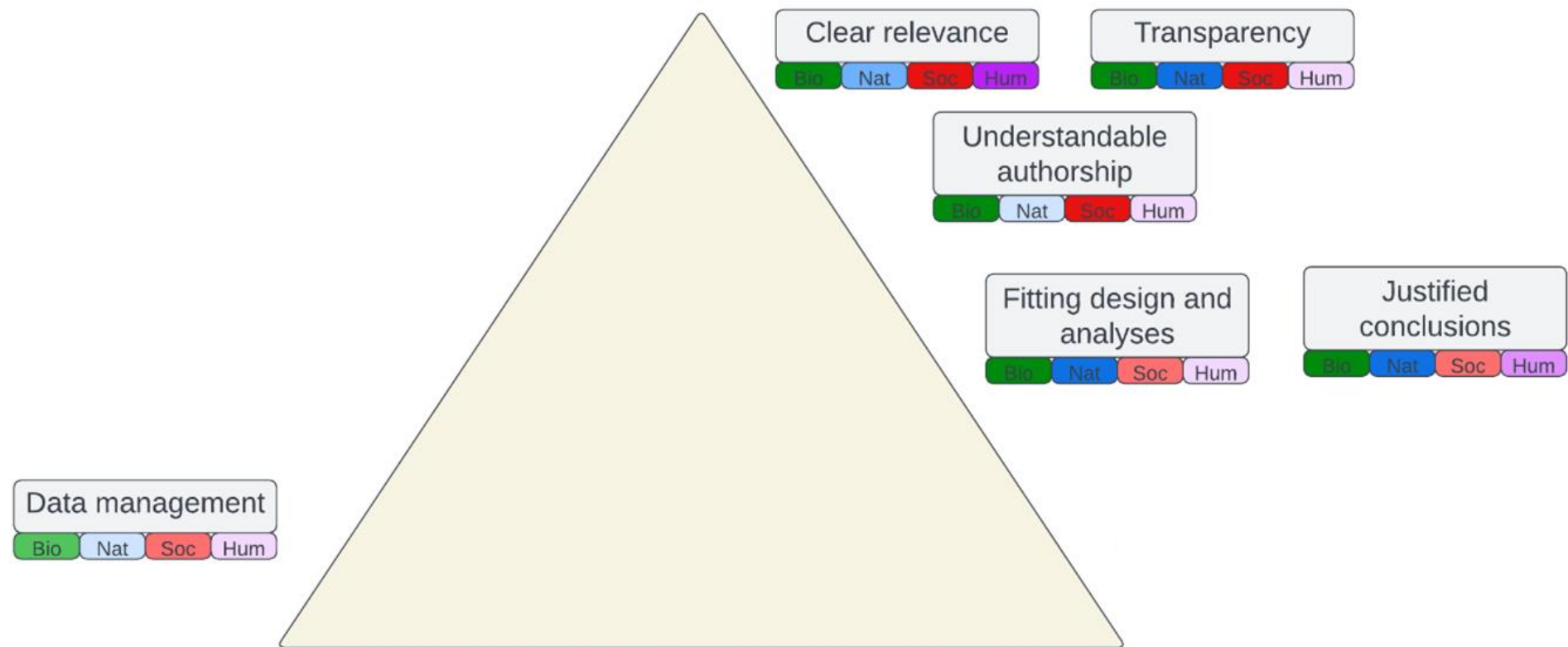


Speaker 1: I think the way you write about what you've measured, so the **wording and the- the certainties that you put in your choice of words**, that that **has to match** very well **with what you actually have** in terms of information and that....

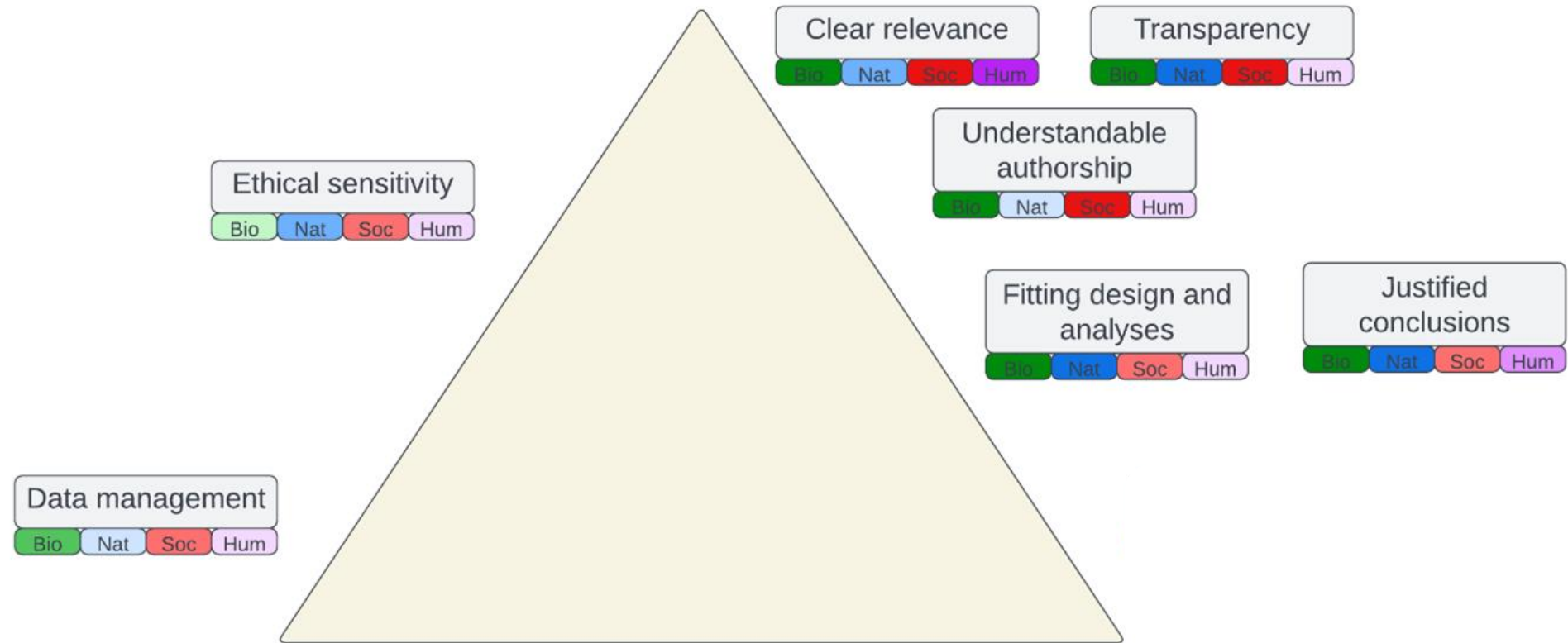
Speaker 2: And I- that's very important to learn that well, how do I word what the- the degree of certainty that I have in my experimental setup? And that- that's in **replication, that's- that's in statistical reasoning. In all kinds of facets that's locked in.**

- Supervisors natural sciences

I feel like on this one on the being clear in your documentation and handling and instruments and all such, it's **very implicit** actually. Like I've heard my **supervisor talk about it** and so I have this unclear concept since the start that it's very important to document and everything, but I don't know how or like what they do or Yeah, so I've been like trying to figure out ways. I've **redesigned my strategy a hundred times** since.

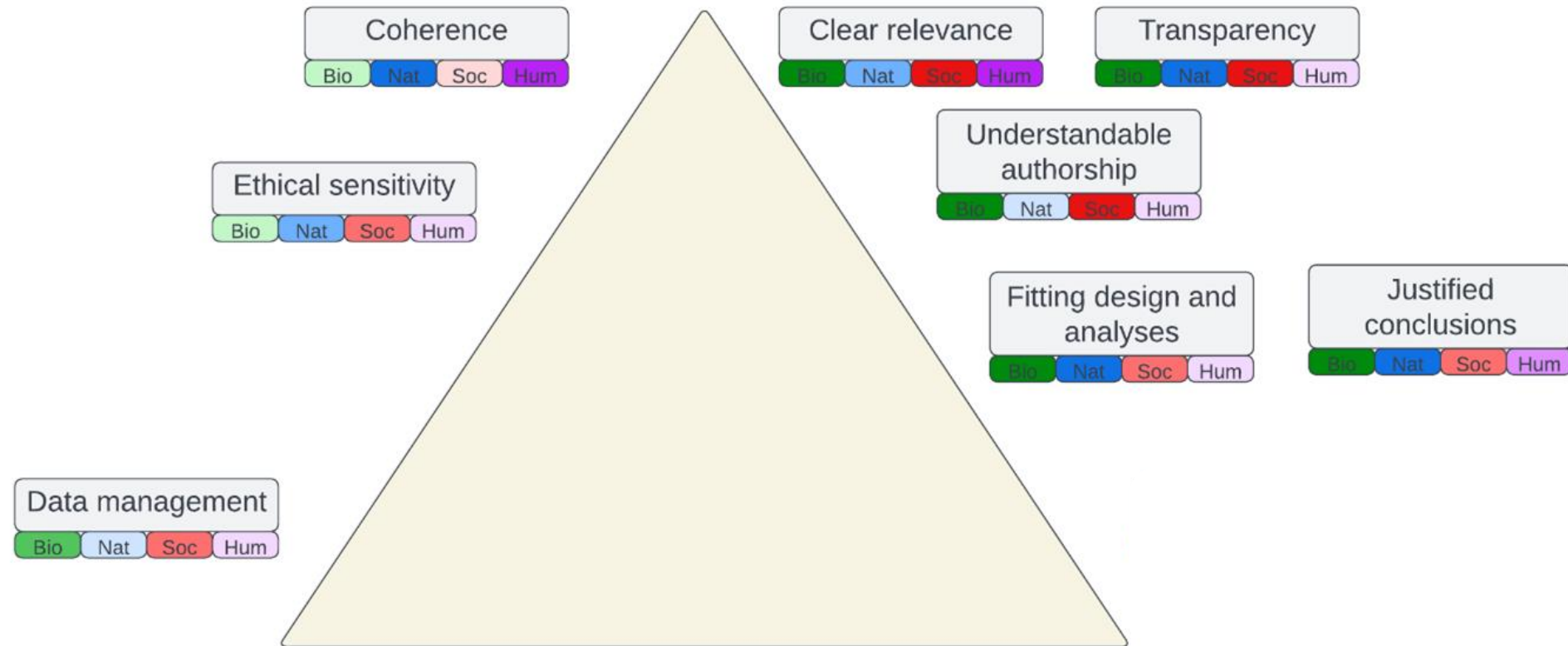


Yes, but say with that, whether it's a role modeling or-or discussion, I'm trying to indicate that it's important that your **research also be reviewed by independent people** still on **ethical aspects**. Huh, that it's not about making your research as easy as possible, but that you just want to do good- **as good research as possible..**



– Supervisor
biomedical sciences

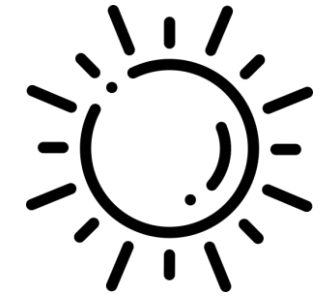
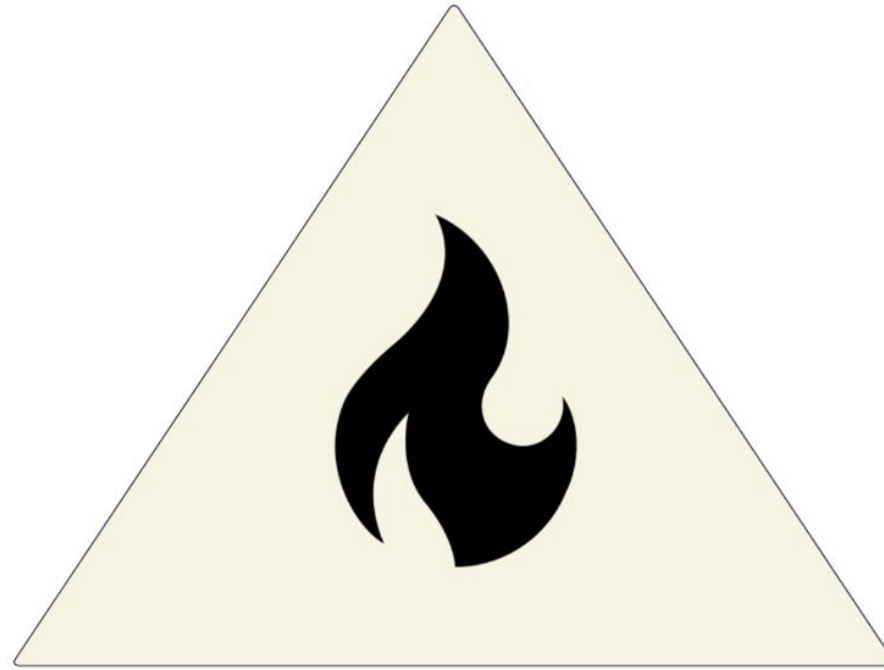
Don't necessarily think it's either or. I think to some extent **it's both...** I also know that in working together with PhD students, I need to think about how I act as well. **Am I also practising what I'm preaching?** ... And perhaps too, co-authoring, **showing them when you write, how do you then establish coherence in a paper?** How do you write reflexively? ... **I think somehow it becomes intertwined in the actual supervision process.**

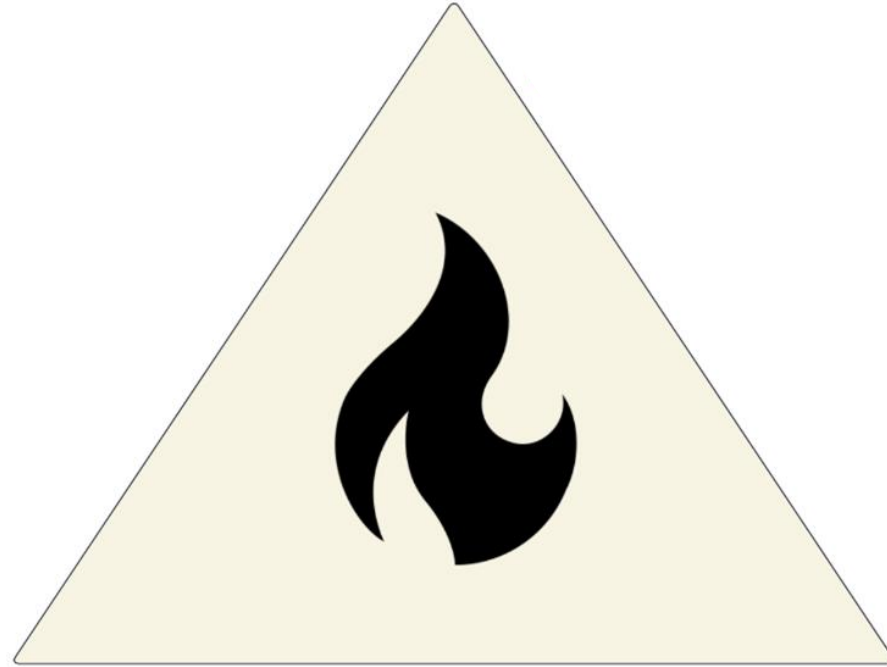




“It takes two flints to make a fire.”

Louisa May Alcott
1832-1888
Author





DISCUSSION

Leadership theories depart from ***characteristics, traits, or actions*** from the supervisor

Critique: Supervision does not happen in a vacuum → supervisory ***climate***

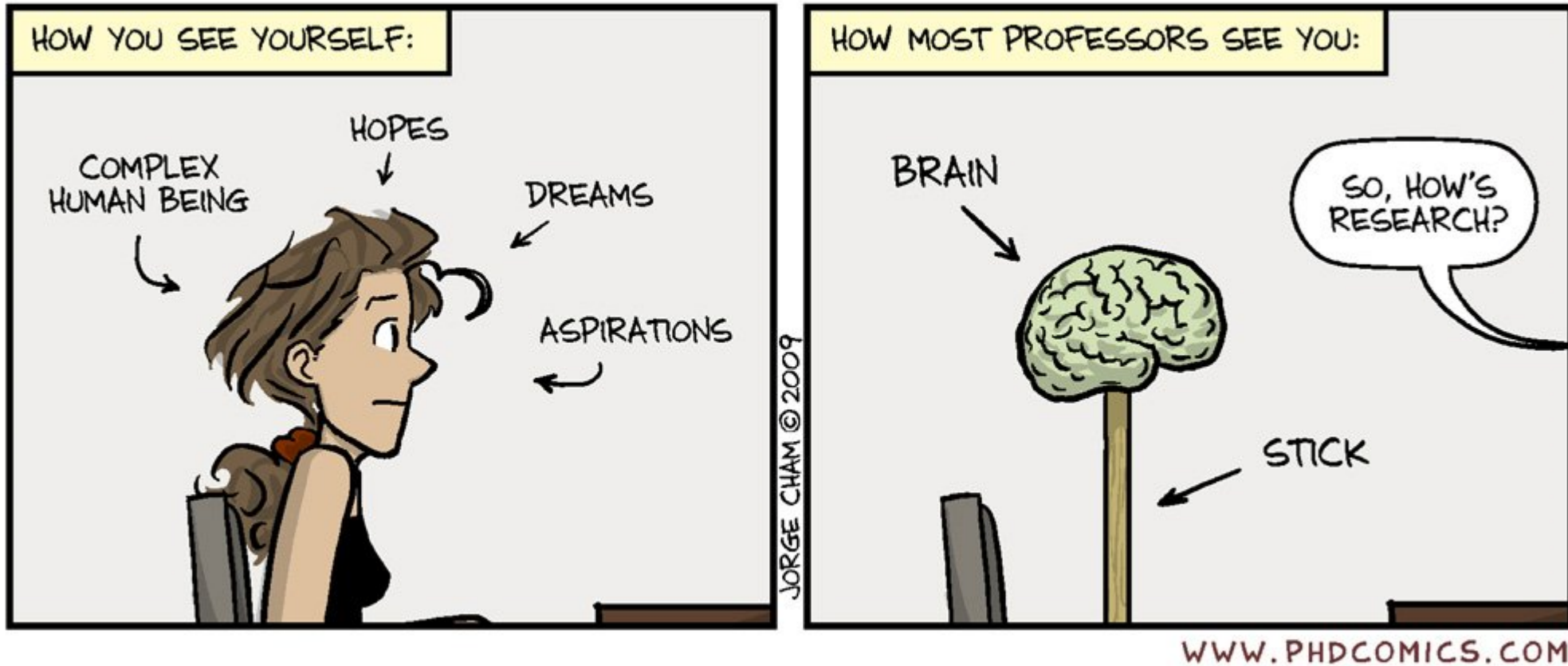
Limitation: North-Western context

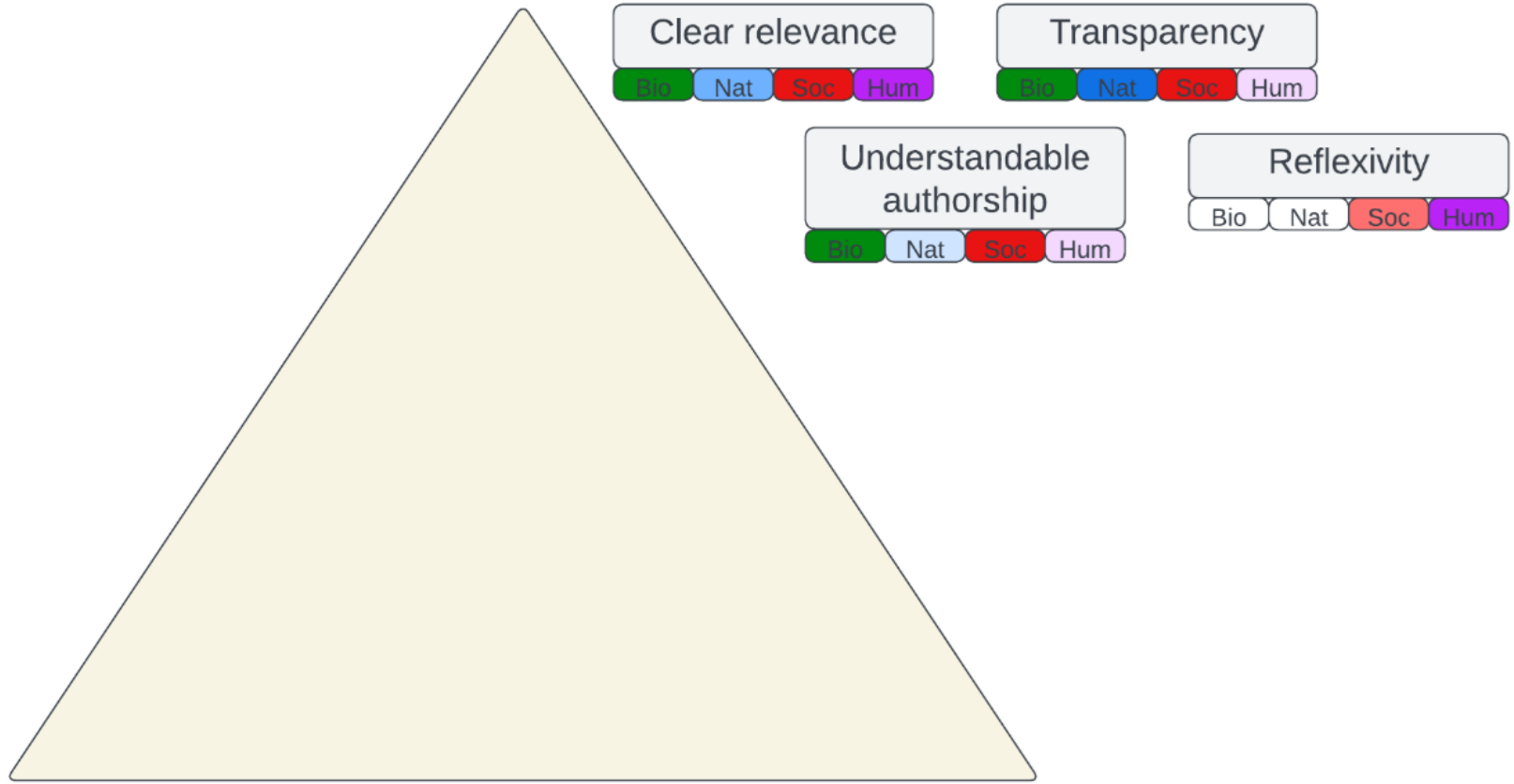
Practices could take different shape in different (***cultural***) ***settings*** →

Traineeship research master's students

QUESTIONS?

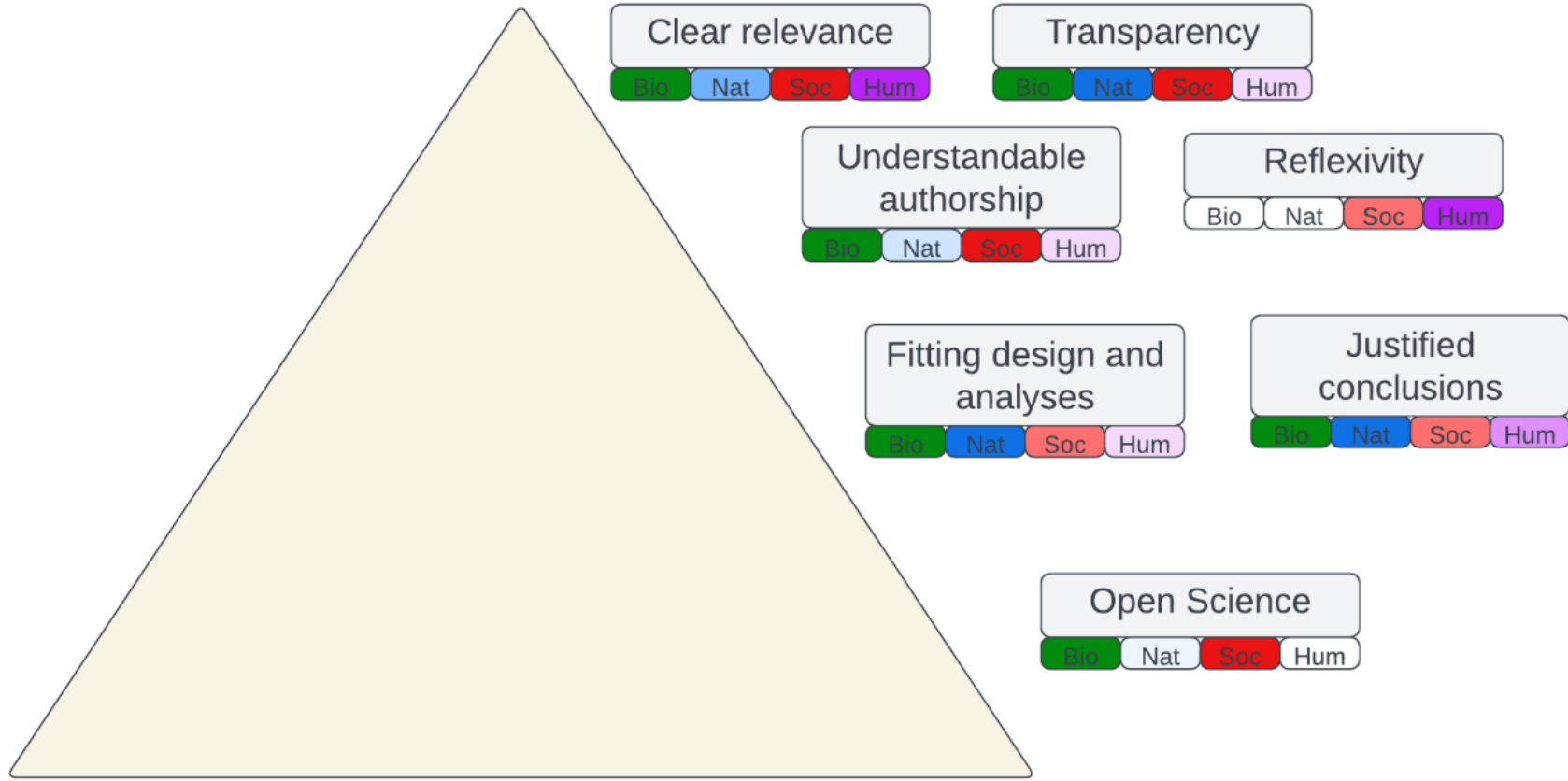
Illustration by PhDcomics from www.phdcomics.com





I have being aware of one's own and **cultural slash societal biases or background** so that, you know. You know, I've been raised a certain way. I live in this culture. I've had this kind of educational background, and that is why I probably have a bit of a **tendency to look at things this or that way**. And I think it's important, especially in something like archaeology

– PhD candidate
humanities

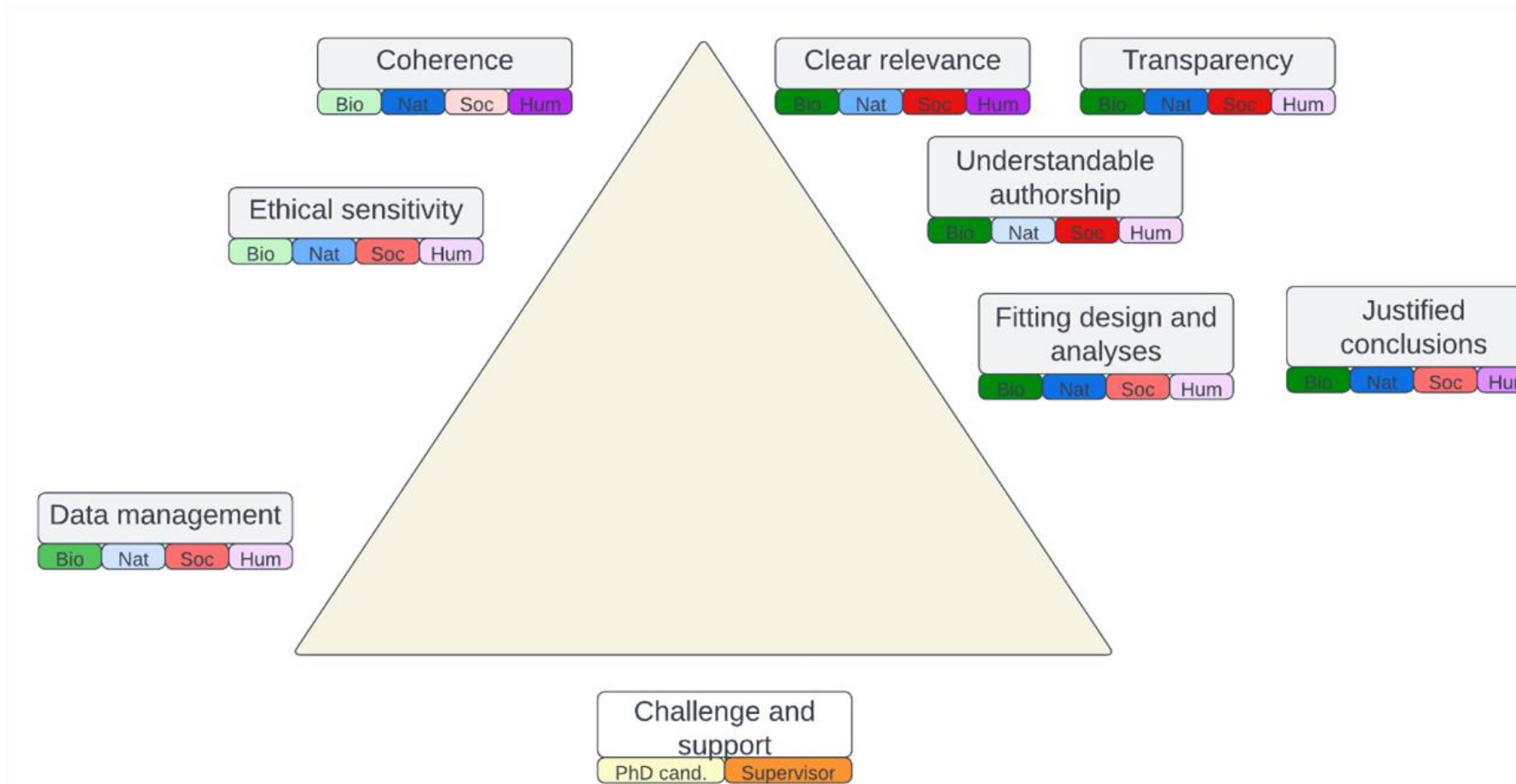


We did that exactly that with my my supervisors. ***The first project I did together with my supervisor, we talked about pre-registration and exactly what we wanted to have in there.*** And then the three projects that I've been doing afterwards, I've just been like implicit that of course this is something I do, but I had that explicit discussion in the beginning.

– PhD candidate social sciences

RESEARCH QUESTION

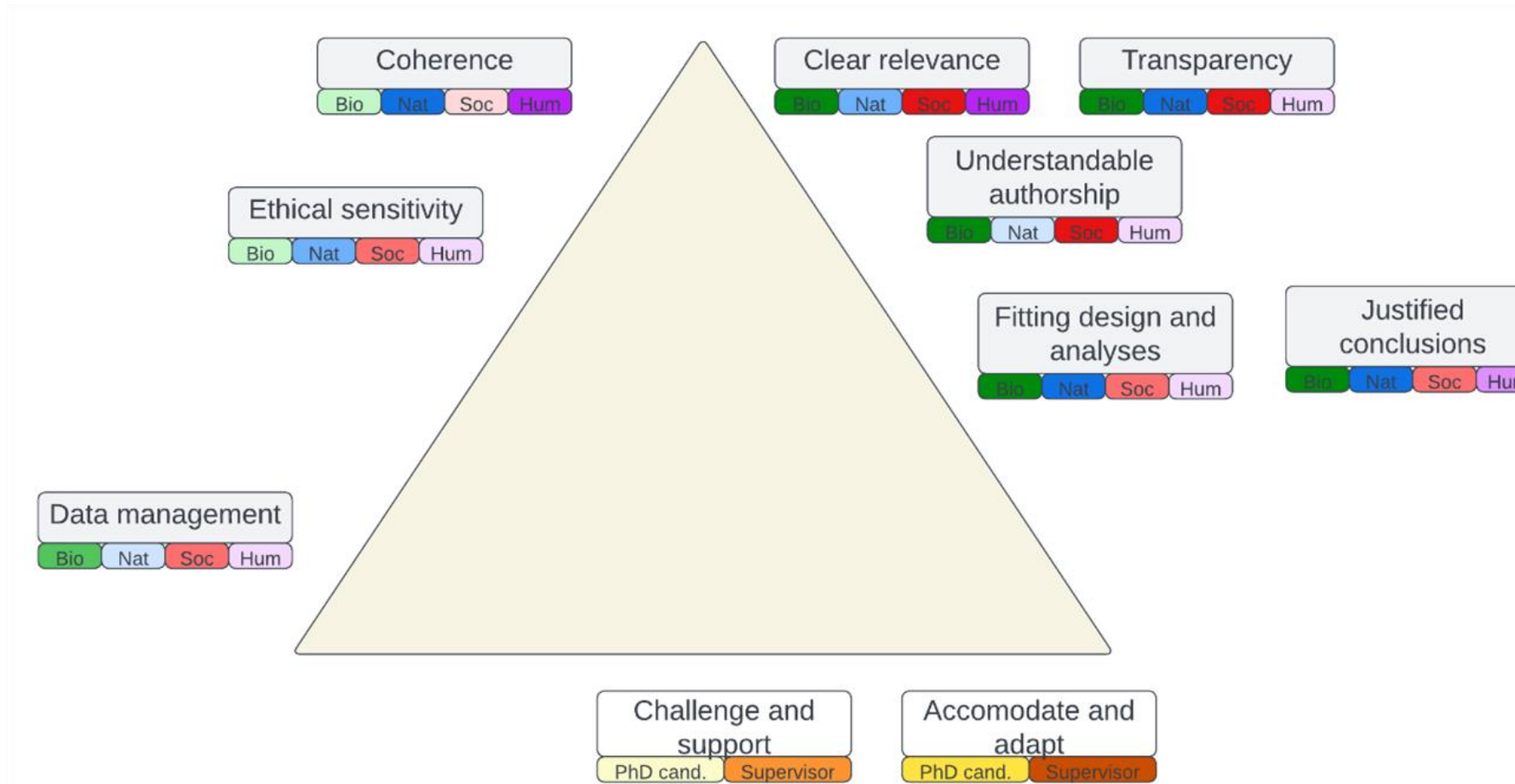
- 1) What sort of ***practices or procedures*** do (or could) supervisors engage in to ***promote responsible conduct of research*** among their PhD candidates?
- 2) What kind of actions or behaviours could promote a supervisory relationship that is characterised by ***psychological safety*** and ***organisational trust***?



Speaker 1: But at the beginning I really had this feeling like I have to have my supervisors judgment to say I'm on the right track. You're using the right instrument, don't worry about it...

Speaker 2: My supervisor never does that. She always says it's your decision. I mean, **she's giving me advice**, but and I have a hard time making decisions. So I think her strategy is **actually really good because she forces me to take the decision and to reflect**. And I think I noted it down somewhere here to explain my decisions. But she never makes the decision for me. Which is good. I know it's good, but it's also frustrating.

– PhD candidates social sciences



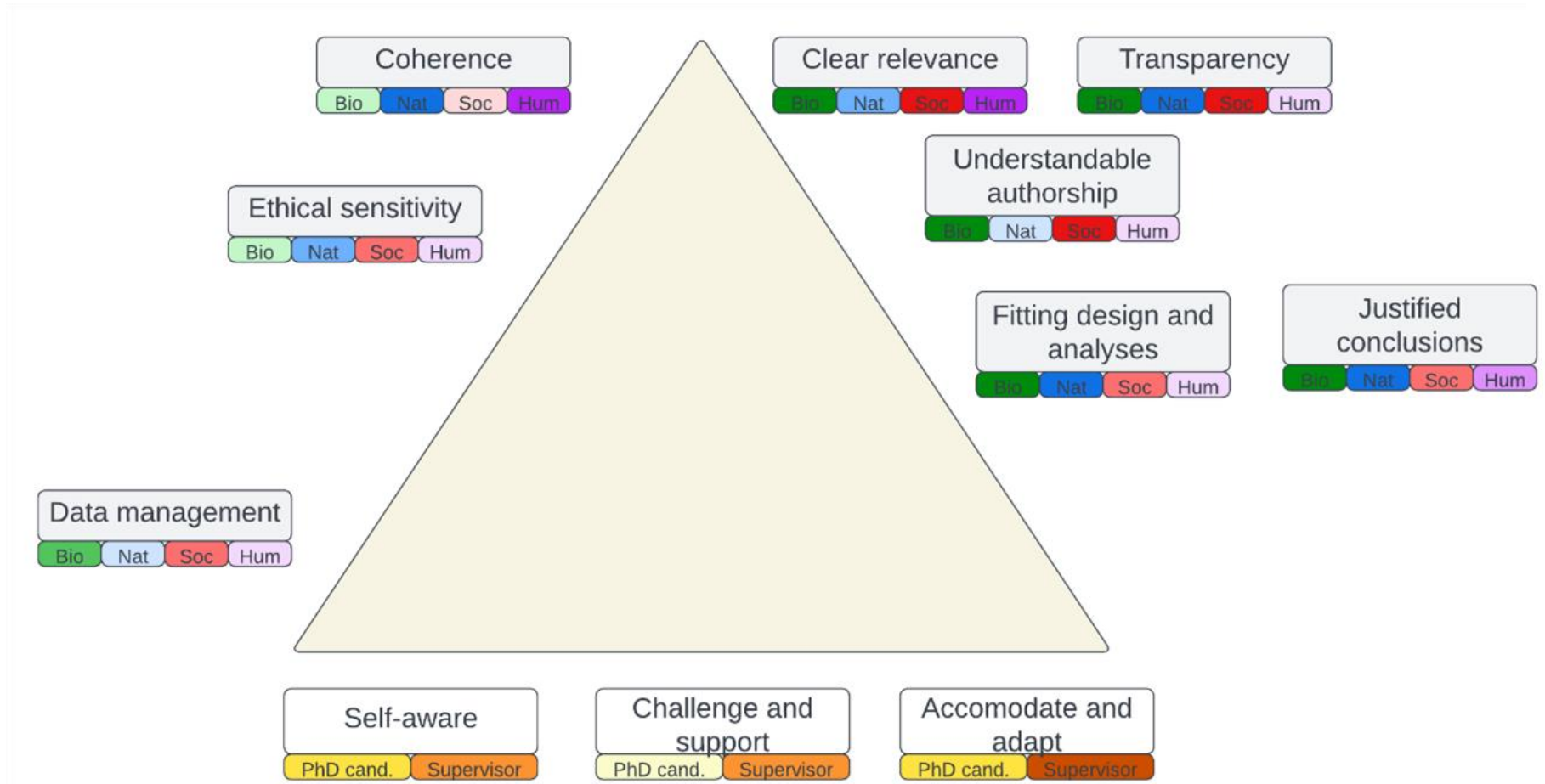
Speaker 1: Yes, and what I still miss, is say is that also ***the supervisor mistakes dares to admit*** or [um] dares to say afterwards of well, ***hey, I was maybe a little adamant, actually your vision has something in it as well***, so that say I still miss that.

Speaker 2: And giving feedback, [um], oh that's that actually.

Speaker 3: And ***asking for feedback as well***.

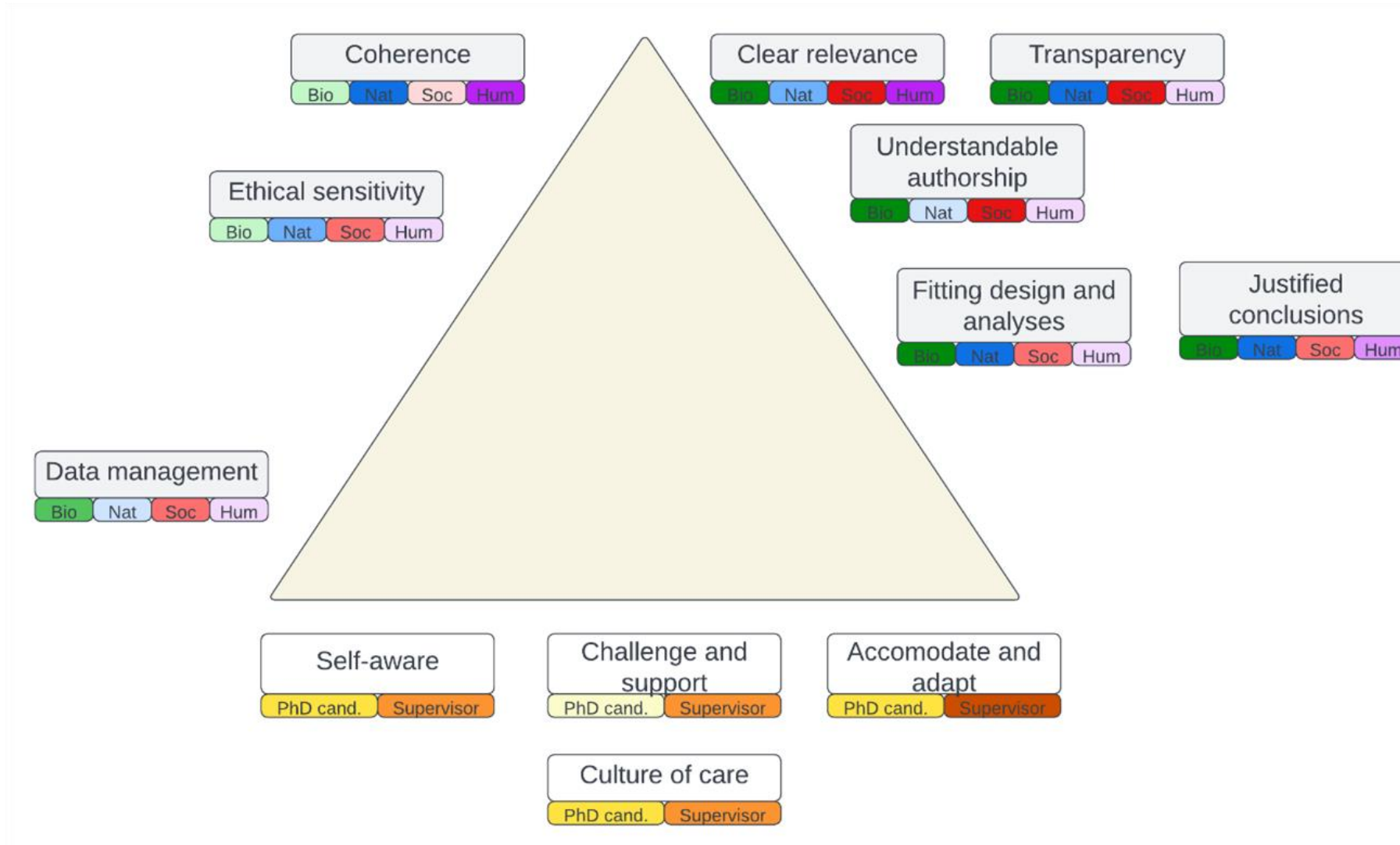
Speaker 4: Saying honestly....

– Supervisors biomedical sciences



As PhD supervisor, you get pretty close to these people... You really want to help them. I mean, that's how I feel about it... But there to be a responsible supervisor, you also need to have **the right amount of distance**, both in sort of in terms of the sort of the personal stuff, but also in terms of respecting that you're also in a professional capacity here... And I mean, for me at least, it's been very sort of it's been very clear in some of my supervision activities that I **have to remind myself** that when I write with my PhD students, it's not like writing with some of my other co-authors who also my friends. It's the dynamic is different and it and it has to continue to be different. It cannot be the same because I still have like this institutionalized role.

– *Supervisor social sciences*



I think all of these three tap into something that is nice, but which should be clarified in some way. Yeah, because this is really about my: ***Do I actually want to share feelings? Can I then do it? Can I then confide in*** and this is my about balance. Uh, the encouraging question. Yeah. So I think all of those three tap into nice things but should be worded a bit differently.

– Social sciences PhD candidate